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FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0068

UNCLAS MAPUTO 000318

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/AF

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [MZ](#)

SUBJECT: EAC - PROBABLE PROTEST OF TRANSPORTATION COST  
INCREASE - MAPUTO

¶1. (SBU) The core EAC met to discuss the security implications of a rider strike which is scheduled for Friday 27, 2009 in Maputo. Charge, A/DCM, RSO, RAO, POL/ECON, DAO, and CONS were present.

NOTE: A rate hike necessitated by increased fuel prices triggered rioting in Maputo on February 5, 2008. However, the current scenario is different.

¶2. (SBU) Background: Drivers of chapas (privately owned taxi vans) have started to cut short their set driving routes in order to increase their profits. In some cases, passengers are forced by the chapa drivers to disembark before the completion of their set route. The passenger must then catch an additional chapa at extra cost or walk the remainder of the route. This effectively doubles the transportation rate to the passenger. The rate is set by the government, so drivers are cheating the system in order to increase profits. In recent days, a protest of the chapa drivers' innovative profiteering has been organized using cell phone text messages. It is unclear if any particular group is behind the protest.

¶3. (SBU) The EAC agreed that it was difficult to predict if the rider strike would spark unrest. It is clear that chapa transportation would be disrupted by the strikers and/or by chapa drivers choosing not to drive. The EAC agreed that if a disruption occurs it will begin in the shanty towns and poorer suburbs which encircle the city of Maputo.

¶4. (SBU) The EAC agreed that the warehouse, which is located in shanty area would be inaccessible if traffic were blocked. The EAC recommended that warehouse employees report to the Embassy rather than the warehouse for a routine training session at 7:30 AM Friday morning. RSO will have security team members checking the city for warning signs of trouble beginning early in the morning. If necessary, the telephone tree and emergency radio network will be activated.

¶5. (SBU) Additionally, employees having difficulty reaching work due to a simple lack of transportation will be excused from work by supervisors on an individual basis. Normal US Mission hours on Friday are 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM.

¶4. (U) Point of contact is RSO Harland Rex (258) 21 492-797 ext. 3429  
Chapman